Care and Selection Tips for

CACTI & SUCCULENTS

OPEN YEAR ROUND!

Belgian NURSERY

BELGIAN'S CACTUS HOUSE

Since 1993, the Cactus House has offered 5,400 square feet of cacti and succulents year-round! Along with cacti of all shapes and sizes, we carry a great selection of succulents with "not-so-prickly" leaves! Wander through Belgian's Cactus House, relax in the year-round warmth, and admire our majestic displays. A great space to explore for

THE CACTUS FESTIVAL

January 24th to February 24th, Annually.

This annual event has become a great indoor winter escape for over 25 years! The Cactus House overflows with cacti and succulents of nearly every shape and size, with many sales offered throughout the festival.

Belgian NURSERY

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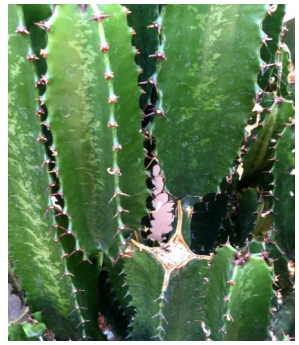
PRUNING & PROPAGATION

Cacti and succulents can be cut back when they grow too tall, leggy, or become top heavy. Each plant is individual and will need to be pruned to suit its needs. Always use a clean, sharp knife or pruners. The cut will bleed white sap, then scar; this is where the plant will often branch out. Make sure that your cut is low enough to keep the plant from getting top heavy, but high enough to keep its shape. Cacti can be started by seeds or by cuttings; seeds are very slow to germinate and can take years to grow just one inch! The cut portion of your cacti/succulent can be laid on paper to dry and form a callus (2-3 weeks for succulents, 1-3 months for cacti). Plant your cutting callus-down in small pots with cactus soil and water thoroughly, letting the soil dry out slightly between waterings while in its rooting stage—this may take up to 3-6 months, so be patient! However, some varieties of succulents (Aloe, Haworthia, Agave) cannot be cut but can have their pups (side shoots) removed and planted. As with any propagating, some may not root. Experiment and have fun!



Light/Location

Cacti and succulents require at least 4 hours of bright sunny direct light, preferring to be indoors in a bright sunny window year-round. Some people like to put their plants outside for the summer (mid-June to early Sept.) but they must be gradually introduced to the outdoors over a few days to reduce the risk of sunburn and stress.

Repotting

Cacti and succulents like to be root-bound. When your plant is ready for repotting, go up one size only; if you choose too big of a pot, the soil will not dry out fast enough which may cause root rot. It is always best to choose a pot with a drainage hole. If you use a pot without drainage, add a layer of stones on the bottom and be extra cautious when watering. Use cactus soil when repotting. For cacti, use wads of newspaper and/or kitchen tongs to help keep your hands free of thorns. For large cacti, wrap it with layers of newspaper and lay it down to gently remove it from its pot.

Temperature

The ideal temperature for cacti and succulents is **18°C to 20°C**. They can tolerate temperatures from 10°C to 32°C (50°F to 90°F). In cooler locations they will require watering less often.

Watering

Cacti and succulents like to dry out very well between waterings. Water thoroughly (to the bottom of the pot) then drain away excess to make sure your plant never sits in water, as this will cause rot. Watering schedules depend on the size of the plant; on average, water small pots approx. every two weeks, medium and large plants about once a month. Cacti and succulents will require less frequent watering during the winter months when the days are shorter. For dish gardens, make sure to water slowly and evenly around each plant. A pot with a drainage hole is best for cacti and succulents; if your pot does not have drainage, add a layer of stones or broken pottery to the bottom of the pot to give excess water a place to sit away from the plants' roots.

The most common issue for cacti and succulents is over-watering (allowing plants to sit in water OR not letting them dry out between waterings). They can also dehydrate from not enough water, so check your plants often.

Watering Guide

POT SIZE	TIMING (APPROX.)	VOLUME (APPROX.)
1" to 3"	Every 10-14 Days	1/4 cup
6" to 8"	Monthly	2 to 3 cups
10"	Monthly	4 to 6 cups
12" and over	Monthly	1 to 2 litres
Small Dish Garden	Every 3-4 weeks	1-2 cups
Large Dish Garden	Monthly	3-5 cups

Plant Problems

Poor watering practices are the #1 killer of most cacti and succulents. Root rot is caused from watering too often or being left to sit in excess water. If this is a concern, place the plant in a warm, dry area to dry it out faster. Change your watering habits to prevent this problem from happening in the future.

Dehydration is caused from not watering deep enough or too much time between waterings. To rehydrate your plants, water thoroughly and then drain excess water away. Keep in mind that some plants may not recover, even when you do everything right.

Insects

Mealy bug and scale insects are pests that can affect cacti and succulents. Mealy bugs look like small cotton masses; scale insects have brown or gray shells resembling bark. Both can be removed by using rubbing alcohol on a cotton ball/swab and rubbing off the insect. Spray plant with an indoor houseplant insecticide—this process must be done once a week for 2 to 3 weeks. Monitor over the next month to ensure all pests have been eliminated.

Fertilizer

Cacti and succulents are slow growing and can store nutrients for many months. Use cactus fertilizer twice a year, once in spring and once in summer; an all-purpose fertilizer can also be used at half strength.